

A Brief History of Robinson Forest

In 1908 E. O. Robinson and F. W. Mowbray purchased approximately 15,000 acres of forest land in Breathitt, Knott and Perry Counties in order to harvest the timber. The Mowbray and Robinson Lumber Company completed logging by early 1923. The E. O. Robinson Mountain Fund conveyed the land in a trust to the University of Kentucky in late 1923, with the stipulation that the land be used for agricultural experimental work, teaching and the practical demonstration of reforestation. In 1933 a Civilian Conservation Corps Camp was established at Robinson Forest to assist in the development of forest roads, buildings and bridges. They also planted trees and salvaged the dying American chestnut trees. In the 1940s the National Youth Authority began construction of the present forestry camp facilities. At that time the State Department of Fish and Wildlife began efforts to restock the forest with white-tailed deer, beaver, wild turkey and ruffed grouse. Forest research was initiated in the 1960s and by the early 1970s teaching and extension programs were established at the Forest with the creation of the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky.

Map and text by: Jeffrey W. Stringer, PhD. and Laurie A. Taylor, University of Kentucky, Department of Forestry. This publication was supported by the Robinson Trust of the University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources are Equal Opportunity Organizations.



Cooperative Extension Service
University of Kentucky
Department of Forestry

Boardinghouse Hollow Interpretive Trail

Discovering Biodiversity in Eastern Kentucky



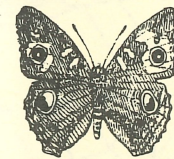
Robinson Forest

A teaching, research and extension forest administered by the University of Kentucky's Department of Forestry

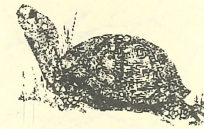
The Boardinghouse Hollow Interpretive Trail

The Boardinghouse Trail provides hikers with a glimpse into the life of the forests of eastern Kentucky. The 0.9 mile trail gains 660 feet in elevation as it meanders its way from the mouth of Boardinghouse Branch hollow to the fire tower at the top of the hill. As you hike up the main trail you will notice a change in the temperature of the air and the amount of sunlight. With careful observation you will notice gradual changes in the plant and animal life and even the soil as you make your way to the fire tower.

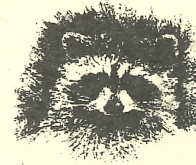
There are 14 numbered stops as well as approximately 35 individual trees and plants labeled along the trail. In addition to the stops and trees keep your eyes and ears open for the many wildflowers, ferns or hundreds of wildlife and insects species that are common to the richly diverse forests of eastern Kentucky.



swallowtail butterfly



box turtle



raccoon



barred owl



blueets



bloodroot



firepink



birdsfoot violet



bellwort

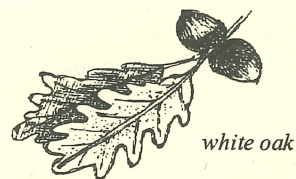
Diversity distinguishes the forests of eastern Kentucky

As the environment changes so does the forest. The trail passes through four distinct forest communities which make up this ecosystem. Ecosystems are built of communities which are complex mixtures of plant (flora) and animal (fauna) species that live together because they have the same habitat requirements. Starting at the bottom and moving up the trail you pass through the *Cove*, *Oak-Hickory*, *Upland Oak* and *Oak-Pine* forest communities. These communities form the mixed mesophytic forest association which covers much of eastern Kentucky. Each community is unique and each species is important. This dictates that we use and care for our forests wisely.

Trail History

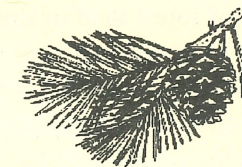
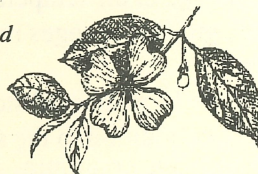
The Boardinghouse Branch was named for the boardinghouse that was once located at the mouth of the hollow. The boardinghouse was built for the loggers employed by the Mowbray and Robinson Lumber Company who were harvesting the timber from the forests of this region in the early 1900s. The Boardinghouse Trail follows the road which was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the early 1930s to transport materials and equipment to the ridge top for the construction of the fire tower. The fire tower was built to aid in spotting wildfires, which were prevalent and especially destructive after the logging of the forest.

Boardinghouse Hollow and Interpretive Trail



white oak

flowering dogwood



pitch pine

The *Fire tower* is located on the ridgetop in the Oak-Pine Forest. The elevation at this point is 1520 feet and provides an excellent view of the surrounding forest. This 100 ft. fire tower was named to the National Historic Lookout Register in 1996 and received special recognition for being one of the few functional towers left in Kentucky

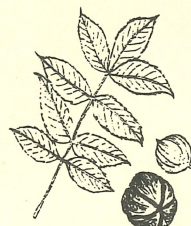
The *Loopback Trail* begins near stop 8 before the steep climb to the fire tower. This trail will return you to the main Boardinghouse trail if you prefer a less strenuous hike.

12. Cavity Tree

Fire Tower

The *Oak-Pine Forest* is the last community you pass on your way to the fire tower. This forest type is typical of those found on the ridges in eastern Kentucky. It is the hottest and driest (*xeric*) area in the forest because it receives sunlight throughout the day and the plants found here have adapted to the xeric conditions of this site.

- 13. Oak-Pine Forest
- 14. Tree Rings



mockernut hickory

The *Cove Forest* is the first community you pass through as you hike up the trail. Found near the mouth of the hollow or cove, this community is in a moist, cool and protected environment. This environment has produced a unique forest community of great biological diversity. Its biological and economic importance dictates that we use and care for this community wisely. In addition to the interpretive stops the short *Cove Hardwood Trail* identifies a variety of tree species found here.

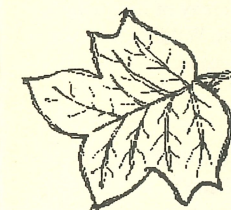
- 1. Cove-Ravine Overlook
- 2. Tree Rings
- 3. Canopy Gap
- 4. Weather Station 1
- 5. Soil Pit 1

Trail Entrance

The *Boardinghouse Flume* is a water monitoring device used to measure the amount of water flowing through the creek. Changes in the rate of streamflow can be recorded during storms and over the course of a year. In addition to measuring streamflow, water samples are collected at flumes to monitor changes in the quality and chemistry of the stream.

The *Oak-Hickory Forest* and the *Upland Oak Forest* are the next communities you encounter on the main trail. These communities are generally found on south and southwest facing slopes between the Cove forest and the ridge top. The trees and plants found here are adapted to the drier, warmer soil and air found on this slope. Take note of the gradual change between the forest communities as you move up through this portion of the trail.

- 6. Transition to Oak-Hickory Forest
- 7. Tree Mortality
- 8. Transition to Upland Oak Forest
- 9. Upland Oak Forest
- 10. Weather Station 2
- 11. Soil Pit 2



yellow-poplar

